

were average citizens. They held the current ethical ideas of the society. The intellectual scaffolding built by current culture was stronger than the new ideas which were accepted. The mores held sway against the new influences. In place of the notions of justice and holiness, the old notion of "virtue" prevailed. Instead of the law "Love thy neighbour as thyself," the old enumeration of virtues constituted ethical reflection. At the end of the fourth century this transformation was recognized by the leaders of the church.¹ The Manichæan sects practiced asceticism even more zealously than the orthodox. Renunciation of "the world" was selfish. The period was one of turmoil. The burdens of the state were excessive. It was an evil that the best men renounced the duties of the state and civil society. Virginity was praised as Christlike and taught in opposition to society and the family. Marriage was not forbidden, but a special mystery attached to it, to explain how it might be honored, although it was so depreciated. The body of that soul which desired to be the bride of Christ must be virgin.² If any one turned to a home and family he must understand that he descended to something inferior and doubtful. The Roman state had been trying for three hundred years to stimulate marriage and increase population. Constantine repealed all the laws against celibacy. Later emperors liberated ecclesiastics from the "municipal burdens which were eating out the heart of the empire." All were eager to become clerics, and as the number of settled priests was limited, they became monks. The wealth of the church also attracted them.³ The situation produced hypocrites, false ascetics,

and vicious
clerics. After the middle of the fourth century the
church began
to legislate that those who took vows must keep
them. The
penalty of death was to be inflicted on any man
who should
marry a sacred virgin. Pope Siricius, in 384,
described the shame-
less license of both sexes in violation of vows.⁴ In
part this was
due to another logical product of the conception of
purity as
negation, especially of sex. Men and women
exposed themselves

¹ Hatch, 123.

² Harnack, *Dogmengesch.* I, 747.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁴ *Ibid.* 60.